



Health, Production, and Morale

Few enterprises in the economy of public health are as dynamic and protean as those broadly categorized as occupational health. The intense concern with this work is reflected in the numbers who turn out for the occupational health sessions at most public health conferences.

Far beyond a nearsighted concentration on specific toxins, particle concentrations, decibels, or safety boots, occupational health has extended its vision to place specialized hazards within the frame of total health needs. The most effective occupational health work is found to concern itself with the general health of each employee. Efforts directed in the past at reducing losses and claims related to accidents and occupational injuries are being directed more at maintaining productivity and morale in the working force.

The changed concept of occupational health is evident in the 1955 decision of the American Medi-

cal Association that physicians qualifying should be certified by the Board of Preventive Medicine as diplomates in occupational medicine, a subspecialty of preventive medicine.

The dominance of preventive over surgical aspects of this work is another indication of the evolutionary trend. It is brought about by a combination of advances in the skill of medical service, by the experience and wisdom of management, and by the tendency of labor to seek services rather than wage gains which are dissipated by leaps in living costs.

The present issue of *Public Health Reports* carries an extra large portion of papers on occupational health for the purpose of directing attention to some of the possibilities in this important, growing, and swiftly changing aspect of the public health profession.

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